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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A forward and backward compatible streaming protocol requires subsequent versions of the protocol to be purely additive relative to earlier versions. When a data segment

5   is transmitted as a data stream, a first stream of data that is in accordance with a first version of the protocol is transmitted, with additional streams of data that are in accordance with subsequent versions of the protocol appended in sequence to the first stream of data. When a read module

10   implements an earlier version of the protocol than a write module, the data segment is truncated to include only the data supported by the version implemented by the read module. On the other hand, when the read module implements a later version of the protocol than the write module,

15   receipt of the data segment is terminated after the data supported by the version implemented by the write module is received.

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